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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY PR DOS SANTOS COURTESY CALL WITH RICE

Classified By: Ambassador Rice for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) During a December 9 courtesy call with Ambassador Rice, Paraguayan PermRep Jose Antonio dos Santos said that Paraguay's priorities at the UN include peacekeeping and human rights issues. He commented that multilateralism is the "only way a small country like Paraguay can be heard." Within the UN, Dos Santos noted that Paraguay has followed the debate on UNSC reform and adopted a "neutral" position, closer to the Uniting for Consensus group (along with Argentina and Mexico). Dos Santos also commented that GRULAC should be reformed to reflect current realities, adding that it has become overly focused on UN candidacies. On human rights, Ambassador Rice said that it is important for the U.S. and Paraguay to build on common ground and stand on principle on upcoming human rights resolutions, especially on Iran. Failure to do so questions the institution's credibility.

¶2. (C) Dos Santos agreed on the importance of credibility and as an example, raised the GA's resolution condemning the Honduran coup, "which did not have the desired effect." Responding to Rice's question on Paraguay's stance on the issue, Dos Santos replied that Paraguay aligned itself with Brazil and Argentina in disavowing elections in a recent MERCOSUR statement. He said that MERCOSUR wanted one voice on Honduras, but suggested that Paraguay wanted Honduras to find its own path. On a personal note, Dos Santos opined that Honduras should "just move ahead."

¶3. (SBU) Rice stressed the importance of moving beyond bloc politics, emphasizing the need for member states to recognize that they can either "play theater, or take advantage of the real opportunity to get something done." Dos Santos agreed, adding that he hopes Paraguay can show, through its voting record in the GA, "that we are independent and follow our own path."
RICE